

Having described the invention, we claim:

1. An apparatus for helping to protect an occupant of a vehicle, said apparatus comprising:

an inflatable vehicle occupant protection
5 device inflatable to help protect a vehicle occupant;
an inflator for providing inflation fluid for
inflating said protection device;
a vent member including at least one vent
opening for venting said inflation fluid; and
10 a vent cover having a closed condition for
blocking fluid flow through said at least one vent
opening and an open condition for permitting fluid flow
through said at least one vent opening, said vent cover
including a side wall having at least one portion that
15 projects from said side wall into said vent member to
help maintain said vent cover in said closed condition.

2. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said
at least one portion projects into said at least one vent
20 opening, said at least one portion being engageable with
a surface defining said at least one vent opening to
maintain said vent cover in said closed condition.

3. The apparatus recited in claim 1, further comprising a device actuatable to place said vent cover in the open condition to enable fluid flow through said vent opening to vent inflation fluid from said apparatus.

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4. The apparatus recited in claim 3, wherein said actuatable device interconnects portions of said vent cover to maintain said vent cover in said closed condition, said actuatable device being actuatable to
10 release said portions of said vent cover to place said vent cover in said open condition.

5. The apparatus recited in claim 4, wherein said portions of said vent cover interconnected by said
15 actuatable device comprise a first mounting flange disposed on a first end portion of said side wall and a second mounting flange disposed on a second end portion of said side wall, said actuatable device connecting said first and second mounting flanges to maintain said vent
20 cover in the closed condition, said actuatable device being actuatable to release said first and second mounting flanges to release said vent cover for movement from the closed condition to the open condition.

6. The apparatus recited in claim 5, wherein said first and second mounting flanges extend parallel to each other and overlie each other when said vent cover is in the closed condition, said actuatable device extending
5 through said first and second mounting flanges to interconnect said first and second mounting flanges.

7. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said actuatable device comprises an explosive bolt.

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8. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said vent member has a cylindrical configuration, said side wall of said vent cover having a cylindrical configuration that mates with said cylindrical vent
15 member.

9. The apparatus recited in claim 8, further comprising a retainer having an annular, radially extending main body portion for clamping said protection
20 device to said vent member, said retainer having a plurality of axially extending, circumferentially spaced clamping legs for clamping said inflator to said vent member at a location radially between said inflation fluid outlets of said inflator and said vent opening;

said circumferentially spaced clamping legs of
said retainer defining between them a plurality of
circumferentially spaced fluid passages that provide
fluid communication between said inflation fluid outlets
5 of said inflator and said vent opening in said vent
member.

10. The apparatus recited in claim 9, wherein said
vent member comprises a reaction member for supporting
10 said apparatus on the vehicle.

11. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said
vent member has a rectangular configuration, said side
wall of said vent cover having a rectangular
15 configuration that mates with said rectangular vent
member.

12. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said
vent cover comprises:
20 a first cover portion having a first end and an
opposite second end;
a second cover portion having a first end and
an opposite second end;

said second ends of said first and second cover portions being engageable with each other to interconnect said second ends of said first and second cover portions;

said first ends of said first and second cover portions being connectable to each other via said
5 actuatable device.

13. The apparatus recited in claim 12, wherein one of said second ends comprises a latch member and the
10 other of said second ends comprises at least one hook member, said latch member being engageable with said at least one hook member to connect said second ends of said first and second cover portions.

14. The apparatus recited in claim 12, wherein said
15 vent member has a cylindrical configuration, said first and second cover portions each having a semi-cylindrical configuration.

15. The apparatus recited in claim 12, wherein said
20 vent member has a rectangular configuration, said first and second cover portions each having a rectangular configuration.

16. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said vent member comprises a reaction member for supporting said apparatus on the vehicle.

5 17. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said vent cover is formed as a split ring having a generally cylindrical configuration.

10 18. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said vent cover is formed as a split ring having a generally rectangular configuration.

15 19. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said vent cover is adapted to exert a clamping force on said vent member to help maintain said vent cover in said closed condition.

20 20. An apparatus for helping to protect an occupant of a vehicle, said apparatus comprising:

an inflatable vehicle occupant protection device inflatable to help protect a vehicle occupant;
an inflator for providing inflation fluid for inflating said protection device, said inflator having a plurality of inflation fluid outlets;

a vent member connected with said inflator,
said vent member having a vent wall including at least
one vent opening;

a vent cover including a side wall having at
5 least one portion that projects from said side wall, said
vent cover having a closed condition in which said at
least one portion projects into said at least one vent
opening to help connect said vent cover to said vent
member, said vent cover having an open condition in which
10 said at least one portion is retracted from said at least
one vent opening to enable fluid flow through said at
least one vent opening to vent inflation fluid from said
apparatus; and

an actuatable device having an unactuated
15 condition maintaining said vent cover in the closed
condition, said actuatable device having an actuated
condition that places said vent cover in the open
condition to enable fluid flow through said vent opening
to vent inflation fluid from said apparatus.